

EXPLANATION OF VOTE ON THE JOINT RESOLUTION FOR
THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE AGAINST IRAQ

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise with a heavy heart. Today, the House is considering whether to grant the President of the United States the authority to use our Armed Forces against Iraq. This resolution would allow the President to enforce all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions regarding Iraq and to defend the national security of our country against the continuing threat posed by Iraq.

Under our Constitution, only Congress has the power to declare war. Because the decision to go to war is the gravest vote a Member of Congress can make, I take my sworn constitutional duty and responsibility in this matter very seriously. Accordingly, I have conducted a thorough analysis of the reasons for pursuing this action since the President initiated discussions several months ago about possible American military action against Iraq. I have also listened to many arguments on both sides of this debate and comprehensively examined the potential consequences that the adoption of a use of force resolution would have for the United States. Finally, I have carefully reviewed the content of the resolution itself.

Ultimately, we must do what is right for the security of our Nation. After considerable deliberations, I have determined that a convincing case has been made that Iraq presents an imminent threat to the national security of the United States at this time. We should therefore grant the President the specific powers laid out in this resolution authorizing the use of military force in Iraq, but only after he first exhausts diplomatic solutions to this escalating situation. Because this resolution strikes an appropriate balance to this difficult matter, I will support it.

Historical Overview

After the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, Iraq entered into a cease-fire agreement in which it unequivocally agreed, among other things, to eliminate its nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons programs and the means to deliver and develop them. We have, however, subsequently learned through international weapons inspections, U.S. intelligence agencies, Iraqi defectors, and other credible sources that Saddam Hussein has amassed stockpiles of chemical weapons, developed a biological weapons program, and pursued the development of nuclear weapons.

In 1998, with my support, Congress concluded that Iraq's continuing weapons of mass destruction programs threatened not only vital U.S. interests, but also international peace and security. We additionally declared Iraq to be in "material and unacceptable breach of its international obligations" and urged the President to take appropriation action to bring Iraq into compliance with its international obligations.

A short while thereafter, we passed the Iraq Liberation Act, which I also supported. In this law we made it the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove from power the current Iraqi regime and to promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that

regime. Because there is no question that Saddam Hussein does terrible things and represents a destabilizing threat to the Middle East, I continue to support the policy of regime change in Iraq.

Imminent Threat

Before the United States agrees to commit its troops abroad, we must, Mr. Speaker, first determine that Iraq represents an imminent and serious threat to American interests. As I have already noted, intelligence reports available to the public indicate that Iraq is in possession of weapons of mass destruction, including both chemical and biological weapons. Saddam Hussein's regime is additionally working to develop nuclear weapons and improve weapons delivery systems. In July, we also learned from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld that Iraq was using mobile facilities to hide its biological weapons research and had placed some weapons of mass destruction facilities underground.

In recent weeks, I have further had the opportunity to meet personally with the President and his most senior advisors. Last week, when I met with President Bush he discussed the reasons for action against Iraq. I have also subsequently met with George Tenet, the President's intelligence director, and Condoleezza Rice, his national security advisor, in classified briefings to learn more about the nature and seriousness of this threat.

From my perspective, the President receives intelligence reports of the most sensitive nature and on a more regular basis than any other elected official in the United States receives. The President is also the only governmental leader sworn to uphold the interests of the entire country. Additionally, he is constitutionally charged with playing the leading role in our Nation's foreign affairs and commanding our military forces. The President has maintained that this resolution is necessary at this time based on his assessment of the imminent threat to the United States posed by Iraq. If the President believes based on the intelligence that he has received that an imminent threat exists, then it is my belief that we must support him.

Furthermore, the situation we now face in Iraq is significantly different from the one we confronted in 1991. At that time, Iraq did not pose an imminent threat to our country, and from my perspective, the United States had not adequately pursued diplomatic avenues before deciding to enter into military action. While we must still ensure that we are not adventurous or overreaching in our approach to the current situation, we live in a new world and we must take new steps in our dealings with it.

Without question, we now know that we cannot trust Saddam Hussein. His actions before, during, and after the Persian Gulf War demonstrate that. Under his leadership, Iraq has, for example, used chemical weapons against its own people, the Kurds, and against its neighbors, the Iranians. Because we cannot trust Saddam Hussein's leadership and know that Iraq has demonstrated its capability and willingness to use weapons of mass destruction in the past, we must conclude that Iraq may not be deterred in using these arms against the United States or its allies in the future.

Moreover, in a climate in which weapons of mass destruction are unfortunately increasingly available and swift in their delivery, even nations without a large industrial base are capable of unbelievable devastation. We must therefore act quickly to safeguard our national security and the security of our allies. If we do not, millions may die. Let us err on the side of national security. After all, as the President has noted this course of action "may bring many sacrifices, yet delay, indecision and inaction could lead to a massive and sudden horror."

Revised Resolution

When the President first began making his case for American military intervention in Iraq, he asserted his belief that he did not need to seek Congressional approval to take such action. Subsequently, his Administration agreed to consult with Congress and submitted a draft resolution authorizing the President to use military force in Iraq. This initial resolution, however, was overly broad, granted the President open-ended authority in his actions, and essentially constituted *carte blanche* for the President in these matters.

Now, through careful, deliberate, and bipartisan negotiation, we have crafted a compromise resolution to authorize the use of force against Iraq. It is this measure that is before us now. In my view, this new resolution represents a reasonable compromise between what the President had initially requested and what the Congress felt wise to allow.

This resolution imposes some appropriate checks on the President's authority to use force against Iraq. The resolution supports diplomatic efforts first, and should those efforts fail, requires the President to report again to Congress before initiating military action. Furthermore, while the original White House draft would have authorized military action in "the region," this compromise narrows the scope of the action to dealing specifically with the security threat posed by Iraq. Finally, under the terms of this resolution, the President must comply with the War Powers Act and report regularly to Congress on the progress of the mission.

As the President pursues diplomatic negotiations to end this imminent threat, it is my hope that he will work with our allies to adopt and implement a strong resolution from the United Nations calling for unrestricted arms inspections in Iraq. The 1998 United Nations resolution contains unacceptable restrictions. Iraq cannot continue to shield its presidential compounds from international weapons inspections. Any new United Nations resolution should also have a strict deadline and a clear understanding about what Iraq must do to neutralize this sensitive situation. Success in these endeavors would ensure that we do not need to use force in Iraq to resolve this problem.

Preemptive Strike

Before we use force against Iraq, we must additionally consider the consequences of preemptive military intervention for our diplomatic relations with other nations. In the past, we have generally only declared war on other countries after they first attacked or declared war on us. Moreover, successful interventionist actions to depose tyrannical regimes have often required international cooperation, not unilateral action by one country. Adopting a new doctrine of conducting preemptive strikes against repressive regimes would therefore represent a major shift in our Nation's foreign policy.

In my mind, the President has made a convincing case to Congress about the need for such action in this instance. His Administration in recent weeks has also made progress in educating the rest of the world about the need for such action. Furthermore, the resolution before us today prioritizes U.S. diplomatic efforts in the United Nations. As a result, it does not represent a radical shift in American foreign policy. It first requires diplomatic negotiation, and only after all diplomatic solutions have been pursued, does it allow for the use of force. This balance should help to assuage concerns around the world that the United States has adopted a preemptive strike policy. This resolution will also greatly strengthen the President's hand in negotiating with other governments.

Long-Term Consequences

As we act to preserve our national interests, we must be ever mindful of the long-term consequences. We must, for example, estimate the costs -- in terms of human lives and dollars -- of such action. In my view, military action against Iraq should only be used as a last resort because innocent civilians will likely die. At least one plan for military intervention in Iraq would also require a force of 250,000 or more troops in order to ensure success and minimize casualties. Additionally, the use of force in Iraq could cost \$100 billion to \$200 billion, according to one estimate by a senior Administration official. Because the threat posed by Saddam Hussein to U.S. security is so great, however, these costs are worth the price.

Moreover, should we act to destroy Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and remove its current leader, Saddam Hussein, we will be assuming the duty, presumably with our allies in the United Nations, of rebuilding that nation and its government. It is imperative that we do not leave a vacuum of power in Iraq, so that one dangerous regime replaces another dangerous regime. If we fail in this second part of our mission in Iraq, we will not have accomplished much. We will therefore, likely need to provide foreign assistance, as the United States did in Europe after World War II under the Marshall Plan. We will also probably need to deploy thousands of American troops in Iraq for many years to come, as was the case in Korea.

Conclusion

Mr. Speaker, from my perspective, Congress must act swiftly to pass this resolution so that the United States can fully protect its national security. In his role of chief executive, the President has the responsibility for the formulation of our foreign policy and for commanding our military troops. He now seeks Congressional authorization to use military force in Iraq based on his assessment of the imminent threat presented by the untrustworthiness and ruthlessness of its leader, Saddam Hussein, and its possession of weapons of mass destruction.

The resolution now before us represents a reasonable compromise between the desires of the Administration and the goals of Congress to protect the American people. It is a new step for the new world we now face. For these and other reasons, we should support this resolution and support the President as he upholds the duties he has sworn to do.
